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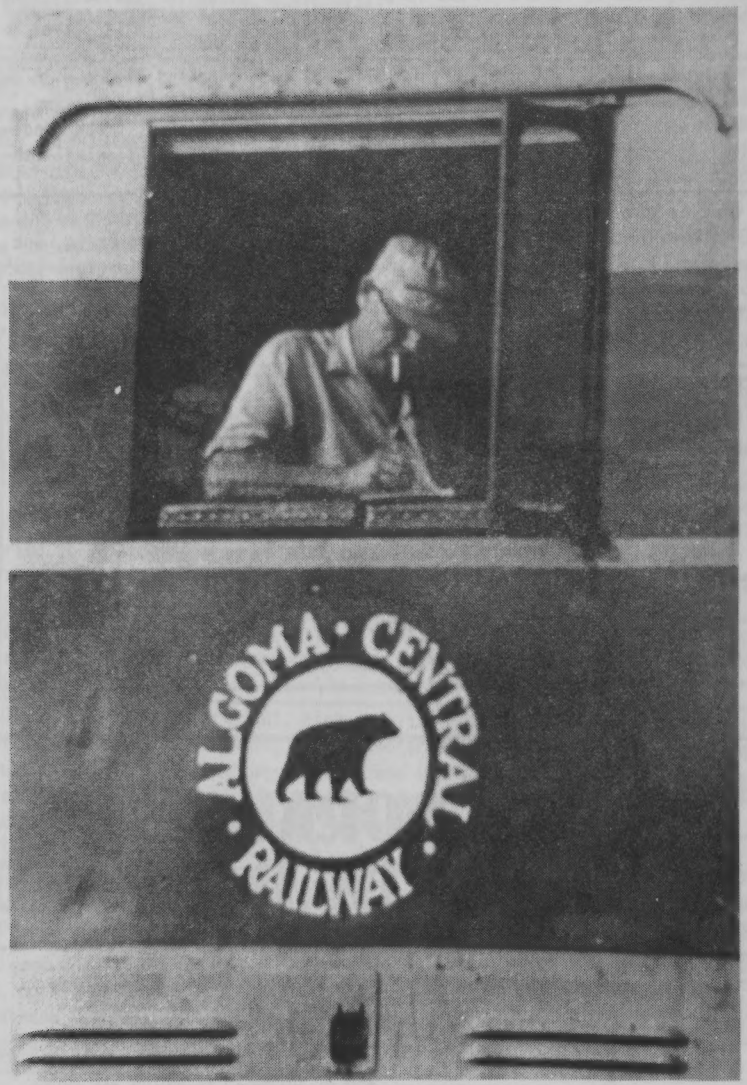

rail travel newsletter

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VOL. 4 NO. 2
SECOND ISSUE OF
JANUARY 1974
#76

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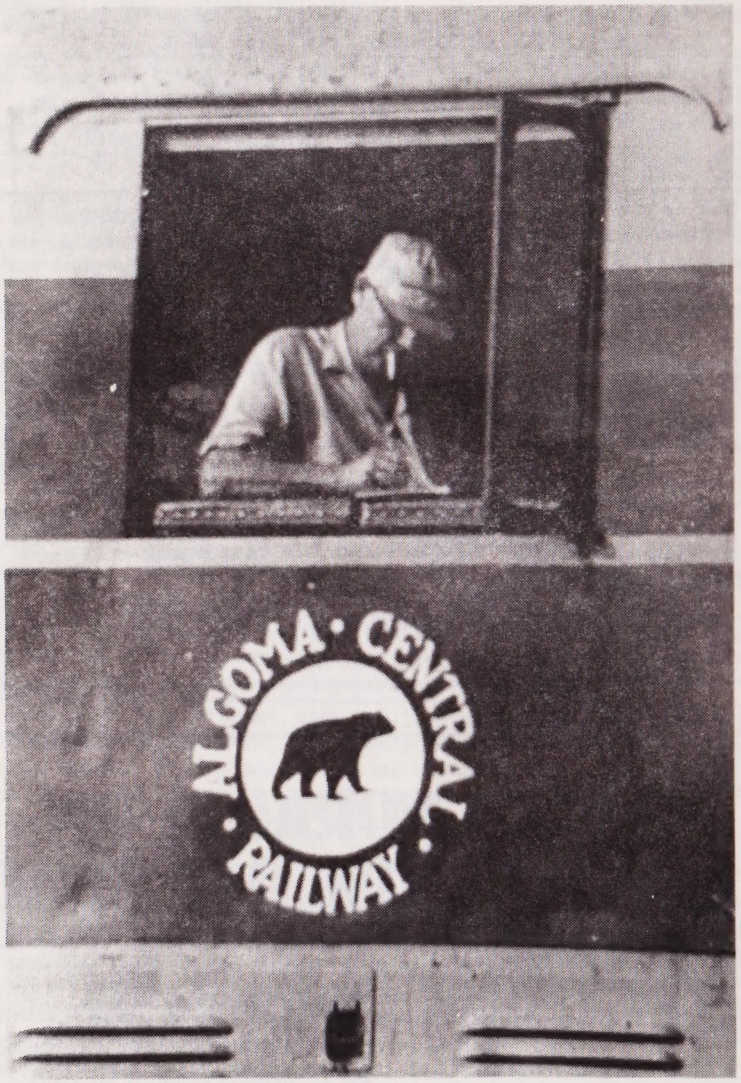

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ON THE COVER:

(front cover) A vivid yellow and green Ontario Northland diesel waits at Cochrane, Ontario, for departure to Moosonee with tri-weekly mixed train No. 421.

(rear cover) An Algoma Central engineer takes care of his paperwork at the end of the run while waiting for hundreds of passengers to detrain from his 16-car consist at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, following one of ACR's daylong Agawa Canyon Tours.

Both photos are by Gilbert Hulin, who wrote the special feature for this issue on Little Railways of Canada, which starts on page 8. Gil packed this article with valuable information for the rail traveler who's interested in riding or just knowing about some of these little railways that are almost unknown to most Americans.

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORED "EXPERIMENTAL" AMTRAK ROUTE. According to the terms of the Amtrak Improvement Act of 1973, the Secretary of Transportation must designate each year a new "experimental" Amtrak route which will be run for a period of two years to gauge public acceptance, and will become a part of the permanent system if judged successful. After our brief note last issue, a number of readers wrote us their preferences. If you haven't done so, we urge you to send us your vote now for the next route that should become an experimental run. Please write as soon as possible, and we will tally the vote and publish it here. Please make your communications brief and on a separate sheet of paper from any other correspondence.

As we go to press, it is rumored that the Dept. of Transportation will attempt to circumvent the Laws of Congress, in the form of the Act mentioned above, and will not designate such a route this year, but will consider the San Joaquin Valley service and the St. Louis-Little Rock-Texas train the next experimental routes. However, it was clearly the intention of Congress that additional routes be designated, and specific funds were voted for the two routes mentioned.

This development makes it urgent that the public holler now. Write us (RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709) and also write your Senators and Congressmen, and of course write the National Association of Railroad Passengers (417 New Jersey Ave. S.E., Washington DC 20003).

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"The Amtrak slogan is 'Tracks Are Back.' That may be so, but as one disgruntled passenger on our train said, 'Yeah, but what about the trains?'"

--William Wong in Wall Street Journal, Jan. 21

"On the train you can look out the window at more than the bumper of the car ahead. You can eat better food--at least on this train (the VACATIONER)--than you can usually get on the road. You can daydream. You can read. You can even write a newspaper story, which is what I just did."

--Barry Newman in Wall Street Journal, Jan. 24

"Here are my recommendations for 1974: 1. The rails. Passenger service in the United States should be nationalized. The mouth-to-mouth resuscitation of dying railroads is not going to work, and what the country must have is a sensible rail system designed not for corporate profits but for the transit needs of the people. The government should run the passenger trains and pick up the bill for losses where and if the losses occur. ... 8. The motor car. The internal-combustion engine has had its little day; we should return now to the incomparable steam engine, which has only a few moving parts, is quiet does not pollute and gives one the sense of flying."

--E. B. White in San Francisco Chronicle, Jan. 27

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Routes	Trains Operated Dec. '73	Per Cent On-Time December 1973	Per Cent On-Time November 1973
METROLINERS	868	42.9	70.4
TURBOTRAINS			
New York/Boston	96	30.2	41.8
TURBOLINERS			
Chicago/St. Louis	95	23.2	22.7
SHORT HAUL			
New York/Washington (Conventional)	604	71.2	79.5
Boston/Washington	534	45.1	65.8
Chicago/Champaign	26	15.4	--
New York/Boston			
Shore Route	114	60.5	78.3
Inland Route	457	62.1	70.4
New York/Buffalo	311	43.4	57.3
Philadelphia/Harrisburg	510	72.7	69.6
Washington/Cumberland	64	62.5	73.3
Chicago/Carbondale	62	38.7	55.0
Chicago/Detroit	124	47.6	80.8
Chicago/Quincy	62	12.9	8.3
Chicago/St. Louis	72	36.1	57.4
Chicago/Milwaukee	310	87.7	85.3
Seattle/Portland	186	73.1	73.3
Los Angeles/San Diego	186	88.2	89.4
TOTAL SHORT HAUL	3632	62.5	71.5
LONG DISTANCE ROUTES			
New York/Chicago	63	4.8	6.6
New York/Florida	294	38.1	66.3
New York/Harrisburg	62	54.8	50.0
New York/Kansas City	62	1.6	0
Washington/St. Louis	26	0	0
Chicago/Washington	62	11.3	5.0
Cincinnati/Washington	62	14.5	21.7
Chicago/Newport News	62	24.2	18.3
Chicago/Florida	98	33.7	42.6
Chicago/New Orleans	62	1.6	10.0
Chicago/Houston	62	37.1	48.3
Chicago/Los Angeles	62	40.3	76.7
Chicago/Oakland	62	17.7	33.3
Chicago/Seattle	62	41.9	58.3
Chicago/Minneapolis	35	57.1	62.9
Fort Worth/Laredo	26	53.8	61.5
Chicago/Spokane	27	44.4	72.0
New Orleans/Los Angeles	26	7.7	48.0
Seattle/Los Angeles	62	32.3	31.7
Washington/Montreal	62	29.0	70.0
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	1339	28.8	40.6

AMTRAK DECEMBER ON-TIME PERFORMANCE DATA RELEASED

Amtrak on Jan. 22 released its on-time performance figures for December. These are shown at left, along with November's figures. Overall, the rail corporation operated 6030 trains last month, with 51% of those reaching their destinations on time (within 5 minutes of scheduled time). This compared with 63.9% overall in November.

Helped by the energy crisis, ridership of Amtrak trains reached new highs in December in the Northeast Corridor. N.Y.-Washington traffic was up 30.4% over the previous December, while Washington-N.Y. increased 34.1%. For the entire corridor (and not including the Florida trains or the BROADWAY LIMITED) ridership shot up 10.3% over December, 1972, and 15.1% over the previous month. N.Y.-Boston traffic was up 28.3%, to 141,239 riders compared to 1972. Metroliners carried 208,542 passengers in December, while another 421,075 riders were hauled in conventional trains over the same route.

RAILS TO EXPO 74?

Spokane's Expo 74 World's Fair, opening in early May might suffer from the fuel shortage unless train service is augmented to help carry tourists to the exhibition. Washington State Senators are pushing hard for extra Amtrak service to the eastern Washington city, and Amtrak announced this month that the tri-weekly Seattle-Chicago NORTH COAST HIAWATHA would begin daily operation on May 19, the time of the summer schedule change this year, and the date of the next system-wide timetable publication. It seems very probable that an additional, daylight train between Seattle and Spokane would operate to the fair, as well. Washington Senators are hoping for a Turboliner on the route, but because of the mountain grades involved, this appears impractical. They want a direct Portland-Spokane train as well. No official announcement has yet been made about these proposed services, except the HIAWATHA change.

The Spokane fair is built around the old Great Northern depot, and features the GN clock tower as its visual center.

AMTRAK AND THE NORTHEAST RAILROAD REORGANIZATION

By the time this issue reaches you, the February 1 target date for the incorporation of the United States Railway Association will have passed. This date, set by the Regional Rail Reorganization Act that was signed by President Nixon Jan. 2 (see last issue), may also see announcement of the chairman of the corporation and the names of 7 of the 11 nominees for its board of directors. The job of USRA is to set up a trimmed-down rail system out of the 7 bankrupt Northeastern railroads. At the same time, the DOT is to issue a report on what freight service it thinks should be retained in the states affected by the system. This report will be examined by Congress, and the ICC will conduct hearings in March in 13 or more cities on the DOT plan. One immediately known effect of the bill on Amtrak is that the passenger corporation will be given control of the Northeast Corridor and $500 million for track upgrading there. The plan is to establish 2-hour schedules between New York and Washington (Metroliners presently require an average of 3 hours).

In other developments, the Penn Central has challenged in court the constitutionality of part of the Reorganization Act, claiming there is unjust compensation provided to PC stockholders. On Jan. 4 William H. Moore stepped down as president and chief executive of PC, apparently over internal disagreements about the course of reorganization of the road under the new Act. Jervis Langdon Jr., a railroad trustee, took over Moore's post.

POSTSCRIPT TO AMTRAK'S ROUGH WINTER

When we left Amtrak last issue, the corporation was suffering in the middle of a difficult winter. The COAST STARLIGHT, cancelled between Oakland and Portland by a massive washout of SP tracks along the Sacramento River north of Dunsmuir, CA on Jan. 16, resumed operation over that portion the evening of Jan. 25, but with slow operation in the affected area, the train has been running 5-8 hours late daily as of this date (Jan. 31). Amtrak's policy has been to run a separate Oakland-L.A. train when the STARLIGHT is 4 hours or more late and if ridership warrants it. This makeup train usually consists of 4 coaches and a diner. The PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL was cancelled for a time due to washouts, and resumed Jan. 18. A Seattle-Portland train filled in on the STARLIGHT schedule when the latter route to California was broken. The EMPIRE BUILDER was detoured over the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA route in Northern Montana Jan. 18, when the BN's ex-GN line thru Glacier Park was hit by rapid runoff from heavy rains accompanying Chinook winds. The route was severed in two places near Troy, Montana, trapping an EMPIRE BUILDER train there on Jan. 15. Passengers were bused on, but the consist was immobilized. Milwaukee Road's St. Paul pass route (electrified) east from Avery, Idaho, was closed also, forcing all east-west trains in the Northwest to the ex-NP route. During the recent cold snap, Amtrak began running Chicago-Seattle mail cars far rear on the BUILDER, bringing the passenger cars closer to the steam generators. Extra diesel units and often BN "heater cars" were added to the BUILDER consists. The BUILDER leaving Seattle Jan. 19 was the first train thru via the ex-GN line. The marooned set of equipment was due in Seattle late that same day. (The BUILDER has been missing some of its "Great Dome" cars lately, in the shops for repairs. Ex-DENVER ZEPHYR cars such as "Silver Cup" and "Silver Kettle" has been subbing.)

Amtrak wasn't the only operator with winter weather problems. The Fraser Canyon in British Columbia was closed to traffic due to heavy snow Jan. 14-16. Hundreds of highway vehicles were abandoned. One unidentified passenger train due in Vancouver Jan. 14 arrived on the 16th.

Is there a single predominant cause of heating and air conditioning failures in Amtrak cars, readers ask. An Amtrak spokesman says that if there is, it's the horrible condition of equipment when Amtrak got it, due to deferred maintenance by the railroads. Amtrak finds that bad-ordered cars are 3 times more numerous among non-renovated cars than among refurbished ones. Refurbished cars now total 1105, with over 800 (as of Jan. 21) having had heavy shopping. Phase 1 of Amtrak's program is refurbishing; about next fall, phase 2 should begin, with replacement of heating and air conditioning systems with all-electric systems.

canadian news letter

THE COMPLETE LIST of passenger trains ordered continued by the CTC last month (see last issue) is as follows:

RR	Route	Type	1971 Revenues*	1971 Loss*	High & Low Psgrs/Trip
CN	Quebec City-Clermont	RDC	$41	$134	26 - 19
CN	Quebec City-Richmond	RDC	$46	$184	20 - 12
CN	Deux Montagnes-Grenville	Commute**	$ .8	$ 30	3 - 1
CP	Montreal-Mont Laurier	RDC tri-wkly	$36	$105	93 - 31
CP	Sudbury-Sault Ste. Marie	RDC	$35	$298	10 - 9
CN	Saskatoon-The Pas	Standard tri-weekly	$54	$221	30 - 27
CN	Prince Albert-Hudson Bay	Mixed tri-wkly	$ 2	$ 29	2 - 1
CN	Prince Albert-Regina-Saskatoon	RDC	$59	$466	10 - 8
CN	Edmonton-N. Battleford	RDC	$142	$308	37 - 31

*in thousands **one revenue roundtrip per week protected by additional trip of deadhead equipment. Portion Deux Montagnes-Montreal operated over Mount Royal tunnel commuter line; only Deux Montagnes-Grenville subject of application.

The decision allowed no trains to be dropped, and cited Canada's "looming energy crisis" as a reason for taking into account "the probability of future changes in established travel patterns" and the need for retention of the runs. Eighty per cent of the operating losses will now be paid by the federal government.

By far the most unusual train in the order is the Deux Montagnes-Grenville run, which operates one trip per week from the end of the electrified CN commuter line. This train is often pulled by a diesel thru the electrified Mount Royal Tunnel, and carries only one or two persons per trip thru the mammoth weeds of the Grenville branch beyond Deux Montagnes. Indeed, unless some future traffic projections for the service can be made, the runs are useless, and the financial support accorded the Grenville run could well be used to help upgrade service elsewhere. The usual operating procedure is for the Friday evening outbound run to deadhead back to Montreal. Early Monday morning a second deadhead trip out to Grenville is made to protect the 6:20am departure on the 2½-hr run back to Montreal.

CANADIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT announced in mid-January that it would help finance a new commuter train line north from Toronto to Richmond Hill, Ontario. About $10 million will be spent to get the service going, but a 2-year lead time has been announced, disappointing the GO-North committee, which has campaigned for commuter runs to the area since 1968. Some committee members want the present CN Toronto-Guelph commuter train equipment assigned to Richmond Hill service when the 30 new GO-transit cars begin GO-Northwest Guelph service this fall. Federal Transport Minister Jean Marchand was a little peeved when he announced the new runs. He said: "In Ottawa we no longer have press conferences to make statements (but) only to confirm government leaks." The press had been reporting the new runs for several weeks.

TORONTO'S TTC IS considering a large system of express buses to operate either to subway stations or directly to the downtown area. The TTC has adamantly refused for many years to consider express bus service on the grounds that express runs are uneconomic. Alternate schemes include use of streetcars or electric trolley coaches on existing rail rights-of-way in the suburbs.

Toronto has been hit by a love-feast for streetcars during the last year; and the latest manifestation is a strong defense of the Queen streetcar line, which uses 2-car PCC trains in the rush hour. If and when a subway is built along the Queen corridor, the streetcars supposedly would be dropped. Now a number of local politicians are calling for subway planning on the basis of retaining the Queen car.

NEW IN THE MIDWEST - THE ILLINI

by Ken Maylath

Railroads trying to dump their passenger business in recent years were fond of telling us how discontinued runs could always be reinstituted later if someone wanted to do so. Easier said than done, as shown by the hassle between Amtrak and SP over the Dallas-Houston route and the delays in getting other new service rolling over freight-only lines. I'd hoped my recent visit to Chicago would find the Dubuque train running. But no, more delay there. Delay also in full service planned between Chicago and Decatur by way of Champaign. The railroads are reported less than pleased at the prospect of using freight-only trackage to reach Decatur. In this case at least part of the train, from Chicago to Champaign, is operational, and in the absence of the Dubuque run I decided to check it out.

The casual traveler may have some difficulty in knowing of the ILLINI's existence, since it doesn't appear on timetables available in Chicago. When I inquired at the Amtrak information window the girl volunteered to write the times on a piece of paper. The current schedule is apparently considered kind of experimental and subject to change.

It's scheduled out of Chicago at 3:50pm. I anxiously awaited a look at those refurbished RDC's used on the run, but it was not to be. Shortly before train time, as about 50 passengers waited at track 4, the PA system announced a delay due to "mechanical problems." The delay stretched to an hour and more. Finally, around 5:30, substitute equipment arrived at the platform and loading began. Pressed into service were a pair of refurbished coaches, one former L&N, the other from the SCL. As an extra bonus, food service was to be provided in an ex-SCL 6-double-bedroom lounge car of the type familiar on Florida trains. When we departed exactly 2 hours late, the passenger count was swelled to about 75 by the addition of Champaign passengers arriving for the PANAMA and its 6:10 departure.

The backout move from Union Station went well and soon we were clicking right along down the ICG main to Homewood. We left that suburban location in 11 minutes less than allowed on the schedule--an indication that 5 minutes at least could be cut there from all 3 trains on the line. Things continued to go well as we cleared Kankakee, 33 miles from Homewood, in just 27 minutes. Then, slowdowns between Kankakee and Gilman, 22 miles further down the line. We apparently got caught behind a freight. Still, we arrived in foggy Champaign in 2hrs 20mins, 5 minutes less than the schedule provides.

In the morning I was greeted by another miserable day. Rain and thick fog which was making trouble for airline schedules in the area. Fortunately, my hotel was but a block from the station. The previous evening, the PANAMA got stuck behind a broken-down freight and came in 50mins late. It was late again that morning--not due till after the 8:30 departure of the ILLINI. Again, this swelled our load somewhat, to about 75. Many did arrive at the station with the intent of taking the ILLINI. Not bad on a Sunday morning at a place like Champaign for a newly-instituted run not on the timetable.

The train originated on a stub track at the lower level of the station--usable only by trains beginning or ending at Champaign. Thus, it took a couple of extra minutes to ease out on the main line. Once clear of town, we really started to roll. Everything was going fine with the exception of the heat. All three cars were too hot and stayed that way, even with the doors open.

After leaving Rantoul, I decided to look out the rear and check the mileposts. We were rolling on track that had obviously been renewed in recent months. Welded rail with brand new ballast. I soon determined that the 57 miles from Rantoul to Kankakee, over those Illinois flatlands, were disappearing rather quickly. Fog or no, numerous unprotected grade crossings or no, the mileposts were flashing by at 40 seconds--38 seconds at times. We were tearing along at 90 to 95. No wonder the whistle blasts from the diesel were almost continuous and there was an occasional bump as we slammed across switches. Overall, the track was fairly good. Our pace slowed for a couple of interlockings, then picked up again. We ground to a stop in Kankakee 49 minutes after leaving Rantoul. In recent years the IC division from Chicago to Champaign was noted as one of the very few where conventional trains could roll at 100. The recent track work seems to make 80-plus speeds practical again.

The rest of the journey into Chicago proceeded without incident. This time the backing movement was a bit more time-consuming, but we still arrived about 3 minutes early.

That same afternoon I observed the loading of the ILLINI--with the conventional equipment still standing in for the RDC's. University of Illinois students returning to campus swelled the count to 160. With but 110 seats in the two coaches, some riders obviously had to stand (and there would certainly be more boarding at Homewood). Wonder if some of the overflow ended up in the bedrooms?

One thing seems sure: in spite of its newness and its non-appearance on the timetable, the ILLINI is doing some business. The pair of baggage-coach RDC's normally used have no more seats than the two substitute coaches. They are apparently already inadequate at least one day of the week.

Urban-Suburban Transit

MORE MONEY FOR RAPID TRANSIT IN NEW ADMINISTRATION BUDGET

With President Nixon's State of the Union Message Jan. 30 came the announcement of the expected Administration proposal to allow $2.5 billion in the next fiscal year for mass transit. Nixon promised the bill after pocket-vetoing a bill passed earlier by Congress. The amount is nearly a 50% increase in transit funds, and importantly the proposed bill would permit use of some of it to cover operating deficits, a concept previously opposed by the Administration. Cities would have the option of using the federal funds for highway building or mass transit needs. The bill will be presented to Congress soon. Another bill is to be introduced, to allow railroads $2 billion in federally guaranteed loans for track upgrading and new equipment.

GASOLINE RATIONING TO BE AVOIDED, SAYS ADMINISTRATION

The Administration still hopes to get by without gasoline rationing, although the Bureau of Engraving and Printing is running off ration coupons. Hawaii has independently adopted rationing. Oregon has assigned different days of the week that differently-numbered license plates allow their owners to purchase gas. In other energy crisis developments, there is considerable pressure in Congress to repeal daylight saving time, since several children have been killed in pre-dawn traffic going to school, and only a small energy saving has been attributed to the change of clock time. The 55-mile per hour highway speed limit is now effective nationwide, and among its effects is a reduction in highway deaths. Once again, this month, Congress has effectively killed the Administration's energy bill over disputes about "windfall profits" to oil companies.

TRANSIT BRIEFS: San Francisco Muncipal Railway announced in mid-January a planned $80 million expansion program to be financed 80% by federal funds. $19 million would go for new equipment. San Francisco has been selected by the DOT as a test site for developing kinetic energy wheels in electric trolley buses... BART is very unhappy about new cars being delivered it from Rohr. Its South Hayward yard is currently jammed with unusable cars, and it has asked Rohr to stop delivery until problems are corrected. Equipment breakdowns and improperly manufactured seats are the main complaints. The Oakland-Richmond line has been experiencing record breakdowns, with a majority of cars on the line giving out on some recent days. On Jan. 30 a malfunctioning bi-directional escalator in the Daly City line's Glen Park station injured several people... Long Island Rail Road strike threatened Jan. 21 was cut off by a federal judge's order that the road reinstate second engineers in locomotives and called for union negotiation of the disputed personnel cutback... The Energy Emergency Act still unpassed by Congress contains the provision for Senator Tunney's study of high-speed ground travel on the West Coast between Canada and Mexico...

THE LITTLE RAILWAYS OF CANADA

by Gilbert Hulin

Despite Amtrak's many plusses in attempting to upgrade American rail travel, there are some aspects of the system that lessen the degree of adventure for the veteran train rider. National timetables, a nationwide paint scheme and regional menus have their advantages, but at the same time reduce the thrill of traveling on a "different" train, for no longer are the COAST STARLIGHT, NATIONAL LIMITED or CHAMPION that much different.

One needn't travel far for some real variety in passenger train travel, however, as Canada's railways still provide an assortment of service unknown in the States since Amtrak. For the passenger who wants trains with individual personalities--branchline locals and mixeds, long-distance RDCs, section sleepers, meal stops in lieu of dining cars or oil stove heat in lieu of sometimes-functioning steam lines--the Dominion is the place to head.

This article will review lesser-known operations of four of Canada's smaller companies--the Ontario Northland, Algoma Central, Northern Alberta and British Columbia Railways.

BRITISH COLUMBIA RAILWAYS

The provincially-owned B.C. Railways, known as the Pacific Great Eastern until 1972, today operates passenger service over 462 miles of trackage between North Vancouver and Prince George, B.C. Service is daily on the 157 southernmost miles between North Vancouver and Lillooet, and tri-weekly over the remaining 305 miles between Lillooet and Prince George.

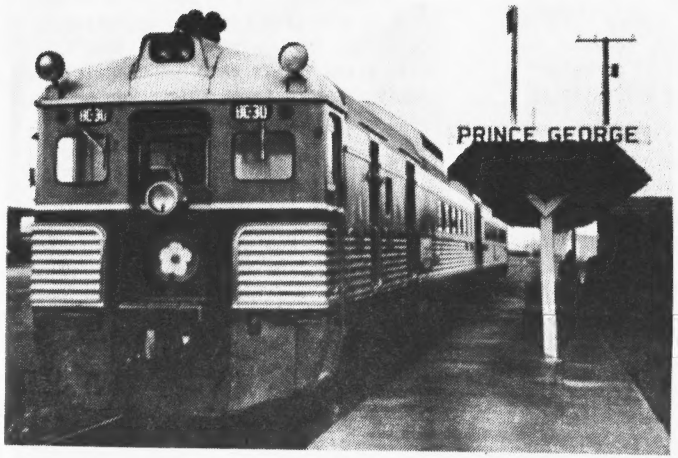
Altho all B.C. Railway passenger service is via Budd Rail Diesel Cars, the choice of accommodations is likely the greatest found on RDC equipment anywhere. Billed as the CARIBOO DAYLINER, the trains have included up to 5 RDC units in summer service during the past decade, but today may be as short as two units in the off season.

But even with only two cars, one is a reserved seat coach providing hot meals while the other is unreserved with limited vendor service. The lead unit, a specially-built RDC-3 with kitchen as well as baggage space ahead of the 49-seat reserved section, offers individual reclining seats with covered headrests and a full-time attendant for the extra fare of up to $5.50 for the full 462-mile trip. The unreserved seat car has vinyl bench-type seats and is used primarily by Indians and sportsmen making shorter trips. Any traveler making half or more of the 14-hour trip between North Vancouver and Prince George would be well advised to select the reserved seat service. On my latest trip over the route in September, the $5.50 surcharge provided 3 meals, additional beverages and pillow rental. Breakfast consisted of two scrambled eggs, ham, Ry-crisp and butter, mandarin orange sections and orange juice. A choice of coffee or tea followed the meal.

Lunch consisted of pressed ham and bologna cold cuts, potato salad, cold bean salad, roll and butter, lemon sheet cake and apple juice. Again coffee or tea followed. Dinner included sliced ham, mashed potato, peas, roll and butter, chocolate sheet cake and tomato juice. A choice of beverage followed the meal and was again offered in mid-evening.

Altho food service is on disposable plastic plates, accompanied by plastic utensils and served on plastic trays to passengers at their seats, it still is a more than adequate repast considering the size of the kitchen and the alternatives in the British Columbia wilderness.

The B.C. Railway passenger operation is basically daytime in both directions. Northbound, a train leaves North Vancouver daily at 8am, arriving in Lillooet at 1:15pm. Here the train terminates 4 days a week, but on Monday, Wednesday and Friday continues after a 10-minute stop, reaching Prince George at 10pm. Southbound, trains return from Prince George on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 7:30am, arriving Lillooet at 3:55pm. Daily a train departs Lillooet at 4:05pm, either as a continuation of the thru train



BCR train #2, a pair of RDCs, awaits departure from Prince George in September, 1973. The units were recently repainted to BCR's colors after two decades in Pacific Great Eastern paint. All photos by the author.

or originating there 4 days a week. Often one or two RDC units are added or removed from thru trains at Lillooet depending on the day's schedule and traffic volume.

On Sunday, only the North Vancouver to Lillooet roundtrip is operated. This ride, possible any day of the week, makes an excellent one-day excursion with time between trains for a walking tour of Lillooet and lunch. Roundtrip fare (B.C. Railway still gives a roundtrip discount over two one-way fares) without reserved seat is $12.50.

Neither B.C.R. passenger terminus could be considered a convenient downtown location. The North Vancouver station is an attractive, modern, brick building adjacent to the freight yard, and altho North Vancouver is a good-sized city, the terminal nevertheless is several miles across Burrard Inlet from Vancouver proper and the CP, CN and Amtrak connections.

A connecting charter bus service is operated from the downtown Abbotsford Hotel in Vancouver to and from both B.C. Railway trains daily, with the 75¢ bus fare collected separate from train fares.

At the opposite end of the run is B.C. Railway's major mistake in its service. Instead of sharing Canadian National's ultra-modern, downtown Prince George station, the B.C.R. operates its trains from a prefab shelter in the midst of an industrial park 4 miles from town.

Whereas the routing of B.C.R. trains into downtown Vancouver would require an impractical, slow, roundabout operation, the extension of a pair of tri-weekly movements over a few miles of CN track to Prince George could seemingly be accomplished far more easily. As it exists, the CN station now serves only the tri-weekly (daily in summer) Jasper-Prince Rupert runs and a pair of tri-weekly mixed trains to McBride.

The timetable lists limousine service at Prince George for transportation to downtown hotels. Upon arrival there in 1972 I found no limousine, altho a too-few number of taxis did meet the train. A few questions raised the answer that the limousine service is not contracted, and thus will meet incoming trains only when it is likely to receive business. This past year I reversed the trip and was able to ride the limousine (actually a mini-bus van) to the station after scheduling pickup with the carrier the evening before.

A dozen years ago the RDCs between North Vancouver and Prince George accounted for passenger service over 58.8 per cent of PGE's trackage. Today the percentage is nearer 25. This is not thru any reduction in passenger route miles, but from the tremendous expansion that undoubtedly ranks the B.C. Railway as North America's number one track-layer of the 1970s. In 1971 a 250-mile extension was opened from Fort St. John to Fort Nelson in Northeast B.C., and a slightly older branch from Odell to Fort St. James is today being extended 420 miles to Dease Lake, within 100 miles of the Yukon border. This latter line is generally considered to

be the likely route for thru track-building to Alaska if such a railroad is built. B.C. Railway, however, has suggested no extension of passenger operations over any of the existing new branches.

The transition from the Pacific Great Eastern era to the B.C. Railway is still under way, but while many diesel locomotives and freight cars still bear PGE lettering, the RDC units were repainted last year to B.C. Railway's attractive two-tone green scheme with the yellow-and-white Dogwood provincial flower emblem. New timetables did not accompany the refurbishing, however, for with no changes in the schedule it saved waste to rubber stamp "1973" and "British Columbia Railway Company" on remaining stocks of the 1971-72 PGE public form.

Ontario Northland train 584 stops at Rouyn, Quebec, in June, 1973, en route from Noranda (1 mile from Rouyn in background) to Englehart, Ontario where the CN sleeper on the rear will be transferred to the Toronto-bound NORTHLAND.

NORTHERN ALBERTA RAILWAY

Altho the B.C. Railway connects with the Northern Alberta at Dawson Creek, thru passenger service has not been possible since about 1960 when PGE ended a short-lived, tri-weekly train between Chetwynd and Dawson Creek. NAR passenger service has remained virtually unchanged for much of the last decade, however, and today consists of both pure passenger and mixed train operation over a V-shaped system.

The passenger train makes two roundtrips a week from Edmonton to Dawson Creek over the western leg of the "V," while mixed trains make two roundtrips weekly over the northeastern leg between Edmonton and Fort McMurray-Waterways.

Unnamed passenger trains No. 1 and 2 are overnight operations, yet equipment is limited to one coach. Westbound, the train departs NAR's Dunvegan Yard in Edmonton Monday and Thursday at 8pm, reaching Dawson Creek the following morning at 9:55. The train stands in front of the well-kept blue and white wooden station at Dawson Creek most of Tuesday and Friday before being wyed in the late afternoon for a 5:20pm departure. The return to Edmonton is again overnight, with arrival at the Alberta capital city Wednesday and Saturday at 6:55am.

The consist of the NAR train is brief. Motive power is usually one of Canada's GMD1 diesels (found only on NAR and CN). One or two baggage-express cars and a single heavyweight coach complete the train. The express cars may be full-length semi-streamlined equipment of apparent Canadian Pacific ancestry, or rebuilt troop sleepers. If more than one express car makes the trip, it likely will be set out or picked up at a way station such as Grande Prairie.

The train's lone coach is a vintage car as worthy of museum display as continued service. Undoubtedly a former parlor-coach or lounge-coach, the dark blue standard car has a center divider and door, altho well-worn coach seats are in service in both halves. Oil stoves in each half of the car provide more reliable heat than some of Amtrak's finest steam-heated streamliners, and despite decades of service, the car is clean and well-maintained from the nickle-plated washbowl to the porcelain light fixtures.

Obviously there is no food on the train, nor such amenities as rental pillows. However, the crews are friendly, and at least one conductor carries a supply of tourist brochures of the Northern Alberta region. Timetables are extremely scarce, no public form having been printed since 1970, and any passenger planning a trip on the NAR would be wise to photocopy the railway's Official Guide listing in advance for reference (Nat'l Rwy Publ. Co., 428 W. 33rd St., New York NY 10001).

Off-train purchase of tickets is nearly as difficult as locating a timetable, with Dunvegan Yard the only NAR office selling any fares, and even that seemingly depending upon the mood of the agent on duty. The conductors expect all boarding passengers to pay cash fares, and express a welcome relief when someone has obtained a ticket in advance. The crews, by the way, change near the midpoint of the Edmonton-Dawson Creek trip at McLennan, and thru passengers will have their tickets or cash receipts punched by the first conductor and picked up by the second, leaving no receipt nor souvenir stub of the trip.

Despite NAR's joint ownership by CN and CP, availability of NAR tickets from interline agents is impossible and thus one can easily understand why Northern Alberta's passenger service is little known and its trains average only ten riders per trip. If not a resident of an on-line community, one must really want to ride the NAR to make the effort to be aboard.

In 1972, an hour before I boarded NAR's train for Edmonton, the newspaper office at Dawson Creek told me that no such train existed. And at Edmonton, where NAR's terminal is some 5 miles northwest of CN's downtown station, taxi drivers may ask directions in locating the freight yard station.

The greatest factor discouraging NAR's passenger service, however, is the competing bus schedule. Canadian Coachways operates three daily roundtrips between Edmonton and Dawson Creek over a 361-mile all-weather highway in slightly more than 8 hours, including meal or rest stops. Compare this with the train's 13½-14 hour roundabout trip over 489 miles, and the 2-dollar saving ($14.50 vs. $16.70) via rail does not seem worthwhile to most. (But where else can one have the choice of paying a dollar an hour on the train vs. two dollars an hour on a bus?)

Northern Alberta's mixed train service between Edmonton, Lac La Biche and Fort McMurray-Waterways attracts more passengers than the passenger train, according to NAR crews, but this patronage is largely from Indians traveling to trading centers from their wilderness homes.

One set of equipment is sufficient to meet the schedules of mixed trains 75, 76, 77 and 78 which take four days to make the roundtrip, 299 miles each way. Train 75 is scheduled to depart Edmonton on Sunday and Wednesday at 5pm, but like most mixeds is lucky to be under way within two hours of the posted time. No. 75 completes its run 126 miles northeast at Lac La Biche shortly before midnight, then resumes its northbound

run the following morning at 9am as train 77, reaching Waterways station at 5:35pm or later.

The third day, Tuesday or Friday, the train starts back from Waterways as No. 78 at 10:30am, terminating at Lac La Biche between 6 and 7pm. Then on Wednesday or Saturday the fourth and final leg begins about 6:30am as train 76, with return to Edmonton around noon, the time depending upon the amount of freight switching en route.

The consist of the trains may include up to 40 freight cars behind a pair of diesels, capped with an express car and vintage coach on the rear. NAR has two coaches for this run, one steel and one wooden, but both with bay windows for the combined use as caboose.

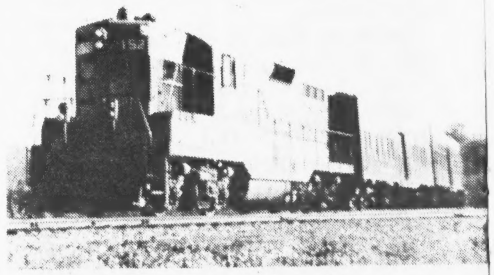
Altho Waterways is a major shipping point in summer months for goods bound for Northwest Territories points via river barge, a $261 million oil sands extraction plant near Waterways is the principal industry on the branch and the mixed trains often include 30 or more black, single dome tank cars.

In September, 1966 a Canadian Pacific RDC temporarily replaced NAR's conventional trains, but this trial lasted only a few months. NAR employees suggest that a main reason for the poor performance was CP's supplying of its oldest and poorest maintained RDC for the experiment. In any event, conventional equipment returned, even if in the form of only one stove-heated coach. NAR's passenger train, however, has been the subject of at least two discontinuance attempts in recent years. The train's future is less certain than that of the mixed trains, but for the dedicated train traveler who wants to step back in time, a trip over the NAR is certainly recommended.

ALGOMA CENTRAL RAILWAY

The Algoma Central operates but two passenger trains, frequency depending upon the season, yet the railway handles more passengers than many Amtrak routes and railroads twice its length. The reason? ACR has recognized the tourism potentials of its scenic route and strongly promotes picnic, fall foliage and snow trains as the seasons change.

ACR's mainline extends 296 miles north from Sault Ste. Marie to Hearst, Ontario. In summer, passenger service is offered daily in each direction over the entire line in daylight hours, but winter schedules call for trains only four days per week. Currently, ACR's northbound train leaves the Soo, as Sault Ste. Marie is locally known,



Algoma Central train #2 rolls out of Hearst, Ontario, at 7:45 on a June, 1973 morning. Altho the two cars behind the diesel are identical in appearance, one rebuilt troop sleeper houses a steam generator while the second is a baggage car.

Thursday thru Sunday at 8:30am, arriving Hearst at 6pm. The train returns south Friday thru Monday on a 7am to 4:30pm schedule. This 4-day-a-week activity is double that of last winter when service was bi-weekly, and last summer's daily operation was an increase over former daily-except-Sunday summer service.

Principal reason for this increase in trains, which has accompanied a 500% growth in passengers (15,000 in 1968 to 75,000+ in 1973), is the operation of one-day excursions over the southernmost 114 miles to Agawa Canyon. Carrying hikers and picnickers in summer, autumn foliage fans in fall, and snow enthusiasts in winter, the regular thru trains carry up to 15 or 20 excursion coaches between the Soo and Canyon siding. The northbound train uncouples the bulk of its equipment about noon, and the southbound train picks up the cars an hour later for return to the Soo.

Popularity of the Agawa Canyon Tours, as the summer excursions are billed (the train itself has no name), is great enough to provide ACR with about 8% of its gross revenue from passenger operations and to warrant the total meal service of the railway. The comparatively few thru passengers for points north of Canyon are warned that dining car service is available only between the Soo and Canyon.

Passengers aboard the two thru coaches include trappers, loggers and miners living in the small villages along the line, sportsmen bound for tourist camps or wilderness lakes, and an occasional railfan bound for a connecting train of one of four intersecting routes. Supplies for most of the travelers are bulky, and snowmobiles, tents, canoes, boxes of food and other wilderness necessities quickly fill up a baggage car. Thus the train usually carries two headend cars, altho the appearance is that of three as a steam generator unit is spliced between the maroon-and-gray Geep diesels and the train. Coaches are wine red with gray roofs.

For the traveler with limited time, one of ACR's one-day excursion packages is a good way to see the railway. Reservations are recommended, especially on weekends when potential passengers are sometimes turned away. Additional details, brochures and schedules are available from the Traffic Manager, Algoma Central Railway, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The railroad will also advise on hotel accommodations.

But for the purist who wants to experience a backwoods local train without the clamoring of hundreds of excursionists, ACR travel to a destination north of Canyon is a must.

As mentioned earlier, service exists on four routes intersecting with the ACR. At the Soo, CP Rail provides a daily roundtrip with RDC equipment from Sudbury. This train arrived and departed the Soo in the very early morning hours (4 and 5:15am) until last spring, when the schedule was revised to provide an 8-11:45am westbound trip and 5-8:45pm return to Sudbury. At the opposite end of the line, ACR shares the Hearst station with a tri-weekly CN mixed train from Nakina. At Hearst there are also thru bus connections to Thunder Bay and points west, or east to Kapuskasing and Cochrane where Ontario Northland trains may be boarded.

Between Hearst and the Soo, the ACR intersects the CP and CN transcontinental mainlines at Franz and Oba, respectively. At these points connections with the CANADIAN and SUPER CONTINENTAL trains are extremely difficult, with transfers from the westbound streamliners to the southbound ACR train the only convenient pattern not requiring a nocturnal arrival or 12-hour layover. One should not give up entirely on making connections at Franz or Oba, however. CP Sudbury-White River trains 417-418 and CN Capreol-Nakina trains 675-676 provide daytime service thru the Central Ontario junctions. Both pairs of trains use RDC equipment, the CN running tri-weekly year-around and the CP tri-weekly in winter and daily except Tuesday in summer. A survey of recent timetables shows the schedules of both pairs of trains varying as much as two hours from season to season over the past few years, and with the ACR's departure time also varying slightly between summer and winter, a check of current schedules is a necessity before planning a specific transfer at Franz or Oba.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND RAILWAY

The Ontario Northland has the largest passenger operation of this quartet of railways. During 1973 the company's schedules called for 12 different trains, altho one-third of this total, in the form of two Timmins-Porquis Jct. roundtrips a day, was being considered for replacement by bus service at year's end (see RTN, Second October issue).

The NORTHLAND is ONR's principal passenger train, jointly operated with CN between Toronto and Kapuskasing, Ontario. The train rolls over ONR tracks between North Bay and Cochrane, while CN operates the Toronto-North Bay and Cochrane-Kapuskasing segments at each end. Motive power, however, is pooled and an ONR diesel likely will be in the lead out of Toronto, while a CN unit will lead the train over the northern half of the ONR line.

The NORTHLAND is basically an overnight train, with the distinction of being the last run north of Mexico in

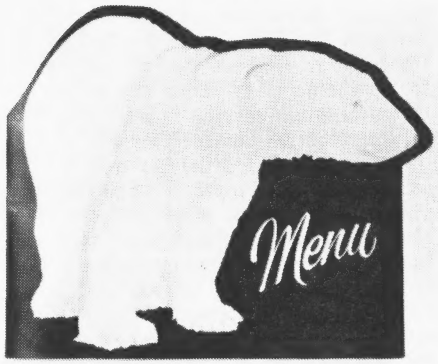
which sleeping cars for three different destinations originate in the same consist. Similarly, the train's coaches diverge to two destinations and the diner-lounge is dropped at still another stop, spreading the consist of one evening's 8pm Toronto departure among four terminals in two provinces by 10am the following day.

A typical day's operation finds the NORTHLAND departing Toronto Union Station at 8pm, with passengers possibly connecting from the CANADIAN, SUPER CONTINENTAL, Tempos, Rapidos, GO trains, and, with operating luck, the Turbo.

The NORTHLAND is usually the most colorful of all Toronto trains, for behind the bright green and yellow ONR FP7A diesel and red, black and white CN FPA unit, follow a mixture of ONR olive green, ONR stainless steel, and CN gray and black cars.

It takes 5 hours and 20 minutes to cover the 228 miles to North Bay, where after a 15-minute stop at the CN station used also by the Montreal section of the SUPER CONTINENTAL, the NORTHLAND backs out to the ONR junction and begins its journey over the Ontario Northland proper. The train comes to a halt 3¢ hours and 139 miles from North Bay, at the division point of Englehart. Here a combine and coach await transferring passengers, while the thru 10/6 sleeper for Noranda is uncoupled from the rear of the train. The ONR diesel on the point is also removed, and it couples to the two local cars and thru sleeper to form branchline train 283.

The NORTHLAND, now one diesel and one car shorter, continues north from Englehart at 5:10am, followed by train 283 for the adjacent towns of Rouyn and Noranda, Quebec, 10 minutes later. At Swastika, 26 miles from Englehart, the Quebec line branches off and the second train turns east toward an 8:10 am arrival at Noranda. The NORTHLAND continues thru mixed forest and farmland to Porquis Jct., 225 miles from North Bay and 86 miles from Englehart. Here the train's consist is reduced even further. ONR branchline train 386, consisting of a single FP7A diesel and a combination baggage-coach,



A bear-shaped menu is found aboard ONR's POLAR BEAR EXPRESS. (Collection of Paul Rayton.)

left Timmins at 6:15am for the 33-mile shuttle to the junction, arriving at 7:05. The NORTHLAND pulls in at 7:12, uncouples a thru Toronto-Timmins coach and 6-6-4 sleeper, and continues on to Cochrane at 7:25. The diesel and combine from Timmins have turned on the wye by this time, couple to the 2 thru cars, and depart at 7:35 as train 387 for Timmins, completing the shuttle roundtrip at 8:30.

The NORTHLAND's next stop after Porquis Jct. is Cochrane, where the diner-lounge, originally in the midst of the consist but now on the rear, is uncoupled and moved to the yard for servicing. The remaining train, down to a full baggage, coach and sleeper behind one CN diesel after starting out as a 7-car consist behind two units, unloads at Cochrane from 8 to 8:15 before completing the final leg of the run over 70 miles of CN track to Kapuskasing. From the Kap, as the town is known locally, a bus connection serves thru passengers for Hearst.

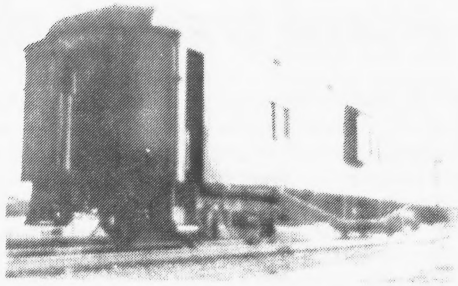
Daily in summer and tri-weekly the rest of the year, a mixed and/or passenger train will be assembled at Cochrane when the northbound NORTHLAND arrives, ready to depart within the hour for ONR's northernmost railhead at Moosonee, near the mouth of the Moose River at James Bay (Hudson Bay). Mixed trains run year-around, making the northbound run Monday, Wednesday and Friday and returning the following day. Nine months of the year departure from both ends of the line is between 8 and 9am, with arrival at the opposite terminal between 2 and 3pm. From mid-June to early September, however, when daily-except-Friday POLAR BEAR EXPRESS passenger excursions are run, the passenger train leaves Cochrane at 8:30 and the tri-weekly mixed follows at 9:30. The POLAR BEAR EXPRESS provides a one-day Moosonee excursion, departing Moosonee at 6pm after a 5-hr stay, and arriving back at Cochrane at 10:15pm, in time to connect with the Toronto-bound NORTHLAND.

Consist of the POLAR BEAR EXPRESS is similar to Algoma Central's Agawa Canyon Tours--15 to 20 coaches and a snack lounge filled with several hundred passengers anxious to get away from city life for a day in the wilds of Ontario.

Consist of the mixed trains, variously called THE POLAR BEAR, THE LITTLE BEAR, and "the regular train" in ONR's brochures, includes up to 30-odd freight cars, as many as 3 baggage-express cars, 2 or 3 coaches, and a snack lounge. The latter car is an extreme rarity in mixed service, for few mixed trains provide any food at all, let alone hot meals. The choice isn't much more than hamburgers and hot dogs from a microwave oven, but being no more than a 6-hr trip, this is sufficient for a quick lunch miles north of Ontario's last highway. (I have heard of only one other North American mixed train offering meal service, that being CN's tri-weekly run between The Pas and Lynn Lake, Manitoba.)

Operation of the southbound NORTHLAND is essentially that of the northbound train in reverse. It originates at Kapuskasing with 3 cars and expands its consist at Cochrane, Porquis Jct. and Englehart as connecting trains deliver thru cars from Timmins & Noranda.

Nine months of the year the Kapuskasing to Toronto schedule is 5:50pm to 7:45am, but during the summer the train operates 3 hours later to allow a connection at Cochrane from the POLAR BEAR EXPRESS. Thus a 2-night, 1-day excursion is possible from Toronto to Moosonee and return in summer, when patronage reaches its peak on the weekend trains. The remainder of the



Wooden coach is one of 2 NAR passenger cars on bi-weekly mixed trains. Bay window lets car double as a caboose.

year, when Cochrane-Moosonee service is tri-weekly, a 3-night, 2-day trip with overnight stay at Moosonee is the minimum needed to visit the northern railhead. But with ONR operating a clean, modern lodge at Moosonee, within walking distance of the station and all parts of town, the trip presents no accommodation problems.

ONR has published several pamphlets and booklets on its Moosonee excursions, including details on what clothing to bring, making lodge reservations, historical sites to be seen at Moosonee, etc. Write Toronto Sales Office, Ontario Northland Railway, 805 Bay St., Toronto, Ontario M5S 1Y9, for these brochures and for current train schedules.

* * *

Thus the rail traveler who tires of Amtrak uniformity can look north for a change of pace and perhaps a step back in time. The snugness of a curtained lower berth at midnight, the warmth of the oil stove in a Northern Alberta coach, and the lazy schedule of a mixed train switching freight cars are all moods of rail travel that no Metroliner with gunsite windows can match.

Passenger service on Canada's smaller railways is not limited to these four, of course. RTN readers should be generally familiar with the international runs of the Toronto Hamilton & Buffalo and White Pass & Yukon routes, but information is very scarce on the passenger and mixed train operations of the Quebec, North Shore & Labrador, Canada & Gulf Terminal and Greater Winnipeg Water District Railways. Can any readers supply details of these companies' current services?

mixed train of thoughts

NEW AMTRAK STATION opened at Jacksonville, Florida January 3. Correspondents describe it as modern and beautiful. The $1.3 million station is Amtrak's third new one and is a hacienda-type structure of steel, glass and masonry, with white broken-face brick and large windows front and rear. The sloping roof is bronze-tinted metal. The station seats 78 and is located on the SCL 4 miles from downtown Jacksonville on Clifford Lane near the intersection of U.S. Route 1 and Edgewood Road. There is an all-weather canopy, trackside patio, and free parking lot for 117 cars..... ON JANUARY 24 Amtrak saluted the people of Vermont for their assistance is remodeling the 7 stations along the route of the MONTREALER/WASHINGTONIAN, and for "taking the train to heart." Amtrak officials presented a symbolic station key to Governor Thomas P. Salmon at a ceremony at the Waterbury train station..... THE TEXAS CHIEF: when will the Dallas re-routing ever come about? Not very soon, as the Louis Klauder organization is presently doing a survey for Amtrak on the costs of track upgrading required, and the report is due in on March 4. Meanwhile, Dallas and Ft. Worth are squabbling about the routing of the train. Dallas wants to bypass Ft. Worth..... THE CHICAGO-DUBUQUE train is still scheduled to get rolling Feb. 14. Amtrak has announced no official name for the train yet, but the UTU News is calling it the BLACKHAWK..... REMEMBER THAT INFAMOUS study commissioned by SP and performed by Stanford Research Institute in the mid-1960's in which SP was told the news it hoped to hear--that passenger trains should be phased out? Well, apparently SP has now commissioned SRI to do another study of fuel efficiency of transportation modes, and when the bus is shown to be tops, Mr. Biaggini will be pleased..... MEANWHILE, CONTINENTAL TRAILWAYS is following Greyhound in quoting in ads the controversial NSF-sponsored study (see last issue) that reports buses achieving 85 passenger miles per gallon. The ads call buses "twice as efficient as your car" and "four times as efficient as jet travel." But they don't mention trains..... WITH ALL THE talk of President Nixon traveling by public transportation, a MacNelly cartoon in the Chicago Tribune pictured him on the open platform of an old car named "Amtrak One" subtitled "Spirit of 1876," while a conductor tells him, "No sir ...Snow Hill, Chuluota, Narcoosee, Holopaw, Apoxsee, Loxahatchee, Hammond, Opa Locka... and THEN Key Biscayne!" While cartoonist Stayskal in Chicago Today has him riding a Greyhound bus ("We're almost back to Washington, Pat...Think I'll walk up the aisle and say 'Hello' to the folks!")..... REINSTATING PASSENGER TRAINS between Kansas City and Denver is what Gov. Robert Docking of Missouri wants Amtrak to do, and the Kansas City Times has editorialized in favor of it. The Times mentions two possible alternate experimental routes, however: Kansas City-Omaha to connect the NATIONAL LIMITED and the S.F. ZEPHYR; or an extension of a proposed Denver-Pueblo commuter train to La Junta to reach the SUPER CHIEF..... COMING NEXT SUMMER: Amtrak is making plans to run the SUPER CHIEF in two sections (not separate SUPER and EL CAP) an hour apart, with the later one making an easier connection from the COAST STARLIGHT. It is known that Amtrak is seriously considering another train on the West Coast, running the route of the STARLIGHT, but as a combination of the former LARK and SHASTA DAYLIGHT, though this can't be promised for next summer. Also, one could likely expect a second New York-Chicago train, since the BROADWAY is so over-burdened. The question is, would it be on a different route? Going by previous Amtrak policy, the answer is no, since a different route means more expense in opening new stations, etc. The San Joaquin Valley service is supposed to be running in March or April, and a definite announcement may be forthcoming by mid-February. Amtrak has made no official announcement of the route yet, but the one most often mentioned in the press in the past is Oakland-Port Chicago on SP and from there to Bakersfield on Santa Fe. Amtrak's people are working on that train and on the service thru Little Rock as well, and one reason for their slowness is that the same people have to cover both jobs at once..... AMTRAK HAS BEEN looking at more railroad cars to buy with the increased demand for service, and reportedly has selected about 200 out of 450-500 still available in this country. Canada and Mexico aren't making any available.....

WHEN AMTRAK RE-EQUIPS its cars with electrical heating, it will for a time be running a dual car fleet, with the rest of the cars steam-powered. The re-done cars will require a 440-volt electric generator in the locomotive, and provision for this has been built into Amtrak's new diesels. (Amtrak will place its next order for diesels in March and should start receiving 110 new engines by July, plus 57 rebuilt oldsters by next fall)..... AMTRAK PEOPLE ARE reportedly taking a trip to Canada to see what Canadian National did to its Turbos to get them apparently working properly now. Maybe there's still hope for the United Aircraft Turbos with their neat dome viewing.....

* * *

THE FOUR REDONE Metroliner cars, with the air intakes relocated, are finished and will get six weeks of testing at Wilmington before going into a 6-month trial period in service in the Corridor..... WATCH FOR AN article on Amtrak coming up in Fortune Magazine in a couple months (the current issue will have one on the Northeast Rail reorganization)..... ACCORDING TO THE terms of the Amtrak Improvement Act of last year, the Amtrak board of directors is being restructured, and must include 3 consumer representatives instead of the previous one unfilled position. Rumors are that the Administration, which must name new board members, has already cleared its nominations with key members of Congress so that they can be okayed quickly. Watch closely for developments in this potentially important issue. The first meeting of the new board is supposed to be in March..... A NEW EDITION, the second, of the "Amtrak Car Spotter" booklet is out. Write for info to Wayner Publications, Box 871 - Ansonia Station, New York NY 10023..... MILLIONS OF READERS of RTN, with car spotter books in hand, spotted that typo in Ken Maylath's article in the 2nd December issue; of course the Amtrak specialty food car on the SENATOR was an ex-Penn Central car, not Seaboard..... CORRECT THAT SUPER CHIEF schedule proposal given elsewhere in this issue: make the 2 sections ½-hour apart..... ADD STILL MORE winter Amtrak problems: a UP freight derailed 9 miles north of Castle Rock, WA Jan. 27 and disrupted Portland-Seattle trains for 2 days; passengers were bused around the wreck between stub trains. The major reason for the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR's long delays early this month was BN's setting of track speed limits according to temperature. When the temperature goes low enough, 80-mph passenger trains get cut to 50mph..... SEABOARD COAST LINE reportedly is upset, and so is Auto-Train, over Amtrak's plan to run auto-ferry service on the FLORIDIAN, between Florida and the Midwest. Auto-Train says it will take Amtrak to court if the dispute is not settled..... AMTRAK HAS ADDEDstops for Waldo and Ocala, Florida on the SILVER METEOR. Southbound: Waldo 9:26am, Ocala 10:05am; northbound, Ocala 2:20pm, Waldo 3pm..... AMTRAK DINING CAR was ransacked by burglars in Seattle's King Street station Jan. 23. Liquor, cigarettes, and a waiter's personal effects were taken..... JANUARY/FEBRUARY ISSUE of Holiday magazine carries an article on the ORIENT EXPRESS..... AT A CONFERENCE on energy usage in San Francisco late in January, Kenneth Watts of U. of Calif., Davis, said "If the President would list our 50 greatest problems, 30 of them would be solved by moving to a train-dominated society. ...We should go after a technologically novel mass transit system the same way we went after the moon"..... A NEW BOOK, "The Way to Go: the Coming Revival of U.S. Rail Passenger Service," by Southerland and McCleery (Simon & Schuster, $8.95) is reviewed in Time Magazine (Jan. 21). Says the reviewer: "Railroad enthusiasts in recent years have ranked somewhere between walrus watchers and Zeppelin buffs. Now, they have emerged as the Cassandras of the energy crunch"..... IF THERE'S A state making a bigger noise about wanting new Amtrak stops and new service than Oregon is, we don't know about it. Seems that just about all the old Oregon stops of the cASCADE are wanted back, plus service in the Rogue River Valley, etc.....

RTN IS LIKE A PASSENGER TRAIN-- the more people use it, the better it gets. You can help by showing RTN to friends and club members and urging them to subscribe. A year's subscription is $7 by first class mail. Write: Message Media, Dept. RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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Tom Coval, 21 E. Robin Road, Holland, PA 18966.

CHILDREN'S STORYBOOK about Rocky Mountain Narrow Gauge Railroading. 28 pages to color. "STEAMY" is a locomotive on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad between Colorado and New Mexico. Gives youngsters a feeling for railroading then and now. $1.75. Dave Ulmer, Jr., 1407 Holmes Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

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Radio just said that the director of the Los Angeles ZOO is resigning; his position pays $36,000. Now what does AMTRAK's Roger Lewis get? What was he promised? He has tried to do a good job. He must deal with other railroad presidents who make much more. This is ridiculous and hardly helpful. --Robert J. Swan, transit leadership - public transit catalyst, Box 1866, Long Beach CA 90801.

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MAKE PLANS to attend the National Association of Timetable Collectors second railroadiana BOURSE. Spend a day browsing among the many tables of timetables, hardware, calendars, books and everything of railroad interest. It will be held at the George Washington Motor Lodge, U.S.#1 and the Penna. Turnpike, Trevose, Pa., on April 20, from 9AM to 5PM. Tables available for those wishing to sell. For information and a descriptive flyer, send a card to Bob Russell, 2737 Haven Ave., Ocean City, N.J. 08226.

A set of two new paperback books has just been published entitled THIRD EDITION VOLUME I & II STEAM POWERED PASSENGER TRAINS OF YESTERYEAR. The Volume I book has 128 pages with 126 pictures featuring 67 different railroads. The Volume II book has 112 pages with 131 pictures featuring 85 different railroads. Both books are paperbacks, size 5½" x 8". Price is $2.50 each or $5.00 for the set. I have many other items of Railroadiana for sale. Send an SSAE for a FREE literature sheet. E. T. Mitchell, 107 W. Circular Ave., Paoli, Pa. 19301.

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